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Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Letter dated 14 March 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as representative of the current Chair of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, I have the honour to transmit herewith the report (see annex) of the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting of the Committee, which took place in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, from 3 to 6 December 2012, and the two annexes thereto.

Annex I contains the recommendations adopted by the Committee following its thirty-fifth ministerial meeting. Annex II is the report on the commemoration of the Committee's twentieth anniversary, which took place on 7 December 2012 in Brazzaville.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 96 (e) of the preliminary list for the sixty-seventh session, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ernest **Tchiloemba Tchitembo**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 14 March 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

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A. Introduction

1. The thirty-fifth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, from 3 to 5 December 2012.

2. Representatives of the following member States participated in the meeting: Republic of Angola, Republic of Burundi, Republic of Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Gabonese Republic, Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

3. The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) served as the Committee's secretariat.

4. The following United Nations entities took part in the proceedings as observers: United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (CNUDHD-AC), United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Central Africa Subregional Office of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNOCA. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs was represented by the Deputy Director of the Africa II Division.

5. The following entities also participated as observers: Commission of the Gulf of Guinea and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

6. The opening ceremony featured a statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Burundi and outgoing Chair of the Committee, Mr. Laurent Kavakuré; a message from the Secretary-General of ECCAS, read out by Mr. Guy Pierre Garcia, Deputy Secretary-General responsible for the Department of Human Integration, Peace, Security and Stability; a message from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, read out by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Mr. Ramtame Lamamra; a message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by his Special Representative and Head of UNOCA, Mr. Abou Moussa; and a keynote address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of the Congo, Mr. Basile Ikouébé.

7. The closing ceremony featured a closing address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of the Congo, Mr. Basile Ikouébé.

B. Summary of proceedings

I. Adoption of the agenda

8. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

i. Election of the Bureau

ii. Report of the outgoing Bureau

iii. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

iv. Disarmament in the Central African subregion

v. Peace and security in Central Africa

vi. Cooperation between the African Union, regional and subregional organizations in Central Africa and the Committee to achieve peace and security in the subregion

vii. Cooperation between United Nations entities in the subregion and the Committee in the context of peace and security in Central Africa

viii. Responsibilities of member States and partners for improving the operations of the Committee

ix. Preparations for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Committee

x. Place and date of the next meeting

xi. Other matters

xii. Adoption of the report of the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting of the Committee.

II. Election of the Bureau

9. The Ministers elected the following members of the Bureau by acclamation:

- Chair: Republic of the Congo
- First Vice-Chair: Republic of Equatorial Guinea
- Second Vice-Chair: Republic of Rwanda
- Rapporteur: Republic of Chad.

III. Report of the outgoing Bureau

10. The outgoing Chair briefed the Committee on activities carried out since its thirty-fourth meeting, held from 14 to 18 May 2012 in Bujumbura. Those activities included:

- Preparations for the thirty-fifth meeting of the Committee.
- A reminder to member States to contribute to the Trust Fund.
- A reminder to member States to ratify the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly (the Kinshasa Convention) as soon as possible. Thus far, only the Central African Republic, the Republic of Chad and the Gabonese Republic had ratified that important instrument. The Republic of the Congo informed the Committee that it had ratified the Kinshasa Convention. The instruments of ratification will be transmitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who is the depositary.
- Follow-up to the recommendations of the thirty-fourth meeting, in particular the implementation of the Declaration on a Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of Arms in Central Africa. Each member State was asked to designate a focal point who would serve as national coordinator for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa. An

information and networking workshop for those national coordinators took place in Brazzaville on 1 and 2 December 2012.

- With reference to the fight against armed groups in Central Africa, a strategy to combat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) had been completed in collaboration with the African Union on the basis of a regional initiative, and would be implemented once financial and material resources were mobilized.

- With regard to preparations for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Committee, the Office of the Chair, the secretariat and the host country had worked together to organize the Committee's twentieth anniversary celebration. A memorandum on the celebration of the twentieth anniversary was therefore one of the documents drafted by the organizational committee and sent to the member States.

11. The Committee took note of the report of the outgoing Bureau read by its Chair. It commended the members of the outgoing Bureau on the high quality of their work and on their preparations for the Committee's thirty-fifth meeting.

IV. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

12. The working paper on the review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa, prepared by the ECCAS secretariat, formed the basis for the exchange of views among States. In accordance with a decision taken at the previous meeting in Bujumbura, the Secretary-General of ECCAS submitted an analytical paper containing proposals and recommendations.

13. The Committee commended ECCAS on the quality of the document submitted.

14. The review of the geopolitical and security situation in the subregion focused on four main areas: political and institutional developments; domestic and cross-border security; concerns related to governance, the humanitarian situation and human rights; and the situation in each State.

15. In the political and institutional sphere, the period under review was marked by difficulties on the part of member States in building consensual political systems and strengthening the rule of law.

16. With regard to domestic and cross-border security, some member States had to cope with many situations of concern. In that respect, there were persistent pockets of insecurity in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and drug trafficking was an aggravating factor in armed conflicts in the subregion.

17. With regard to governance, the humanitarian situation and human rights, member States had made significant efforts. However, many major challenges remained, especially with regard to prison management and the promotion of human rights and humanitarian affairs.

18. Following the ECCAS presentation, the following recommendations were adopted:

- To review, at each meeting of the Committee, the status of ratification and implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, ratified to date by only three member States. That legally binding

instrument was, in a manner of speaking, a compass that should guide States in the areas of democracy and governance.

- To encourage States members of the Committee to take advantage of the introduction of biometrics into electoral systems to update their civil registry systems and make them biometric too, as the relevant experience of the most developed countries showed that the reliability of electoral rolls depended to a large extent on a secure civil registry system.
- To encourage the establishment of a regional strategy to counter drugs and other psychotropic substances and to encourage each member State to establish or strengthen national commissions for that purpose and to report on their activities to the Committee.
- To establish a regional strategy and a framework for cooperation and reflection on security in correctional facilities to address trafficking in drugs and in small arms and light weapons within prisons.
- To recognize cross-cutting threats related to peace and security, such as piracy and terrorism.

The Committee agreed to include reflection on the geopolitical review concept as an item on the agenda for its next meeting.

19. The geopolitical and security situation since the last review, country by country, is as follows:

Republic of Angola

Since the last meeting, Angola has been engaged in consolidating stability and its democratic process. This process has been following its normal course with the peaceful organization of general elections in August 2012, in which the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola won a landslide victory. This favourable political environment has enabled the country to make strides that have been acknowledged by the United Nations Development Programme in the context of achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Along these same lines, Angola took the opportunity presented by the twenty-first anniversary of the establishment of the Angolan Armed Forces and the thirty-seventh anniversary of its independence to announce major restructuring and modernization measures anchored by a national development plan covering the period until 2017 and focusing primarily on combating poverty.

In the realm of domestic and cross-border security, the Government is making efforts to normalize public life and consolidate peace. In that connection, a large-scale campaign for demining and the collection of weapons still held by the civilian population is under way. As part of that effort, the Inter-Sectoral Commission on Demining and Humanitarian Assistance has undertaken a census of mine victims in the provinces of Namibe, Cunene, Huila. Cabinda and Zaire.

However, the period under review was marked by a slight increase in insecurity and crime in Luanda. To respond to these scourges, the authorities have publicly requested, inter alia, civilian cooperation with the police and the establishment of a special anti-crime unit.

In addition, the country has continued to experience strong migratory pressure from neighbouring countries despite vigorous measures already in force, including the repatriation of foreigners residing in the country illegally.

Republic of Burundi

Since the previous ministerial meeting, the Republic of Burundi has been continuing to stabilize political life and the security situation. In that spirit, the fiftieth anniversary of independence was commemorated peacefully.

The return of thousands of refugees who had been living in the United Republic of Tanzania for a long period of time is also an indication of the return to stability.

The authorities are aware that such a balance cannot be sustained in the absence of economic development. They have therefore adopted a second-generation strategic anti-poverty framework and organized a conference of donors and development partners in Geneva, which was successful, with a view to maintaining this process. Moreover, the efforts to counter corruption, undertaken with the encouragement of the Head of State, who has declared zero tolerance for corruption, has produced encouraging results. Along those lines, it appears from the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2012 that Burundi is the second least corrupt State of the East African Community (EAC), whereas the 2011 report indicates that it was the most corrupt member of that Community. At the same time, the World Bank report Doing Business 2013 has just ranked Burundi tenth in the world among countries that have improved conditions for doing business.

However, the security situation is still shaky and requires additional efforts from all stakeholders.

During the period under review, for example, new threats to peace and security were identified, particularly the presence of armed groups operating out of the United Republic of Tanzania and the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Burundi's defence and security forces have taken appropriate actions in response to the situation.

With regard to strengthening democratic governance, freedom of opinion and the peaceful settlement of conflicts, the Government continues to appeal for the return of political exiles. Its appeal has been heard, as one political exile has in fact returned to Bujumbura.

Along these same lines, a law on the status of the opposition has been enacted, and a law on the press is now being adopted.

Human rights organizations and the United Nations have expressed concern regarding the possibility or likelihood of extrajudicial executions. A commission of inquiry established to investigate the matter indicated that such information was false.

Republic of Cameroon

Since the previous ministerial meeting, calm has prevailed throughout the country. However, on the evening of 16 August 2012, pirates abducted three Cameroonians at Idibanyanga in the Bakassi region. In a similar occurrence on 29 September 2012, four members of the same family were kidnapped in their field

in the border town of Garoua Boulai in the eastern part of the country. They were then held in the Central African Republic for over three weeks.

With regard to sociopolitical matters, the process of overhauling electoral lists through the introduction of biometrics was begun during this period, thanks to an active effort by all political parties.

Continued activity by Boko Haram in northern Nigeria, not far from the Cameroonian border, is of concern to both the authorities and the public. An agreement on cross-border security was signed between Nigeria and Cameroon in order to strengthen their bilateral cooperation in that area.

Finally, in the area of humanitarian affairs, there was severe flooding during the period under review, particularly in the northern and far northern regions of the country, resulting in loss of life and significant material damage. On 20 November 2012, Cameroon, together with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Chad, signed the Tripartite Agreement to Voluntarily Return Chadian Refugees from Cameroon, under which some 3,200 Chadian refugees were repatriated from Langui and Pitoa, near Garoua, as well as from Douala and Yaoundé.

Central African Republic

Since the previous meeting, the political situation in the Central African Republic has been marked by the Government's will and efforts to consolidate the stabilization and democratization process. The dialogue begun between the President of the Republic and the opposition party leaders should be understood in this context, as should the consensual adoption of a new Electoral Code following objections raised by the Front pour l'Annulation et la Reprise des Elections de 2011.

The situation with regard to domestic and cross-border security remained shaky and even a cause of concern in some regards, despite the clear improvement noted by observers. The nineteenth session of the Central-African/Chadian Joint Commission led to measures to strengthen cross-border security by means of a joint mechanism to conduct surveillance of the common border and a local cross-border cooperation committee.

The Central African Republic has continued to face insecurity in the southern and eastern regions of the country caused by armed gangs and other militias that lack a clear ideological position. One example is the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a Uganda-based insurgency. Despite this distressing security context, the Central African authorities have continued to make significant efforts, particularly in the areas of defence and security force training and security sector reform, to prepare for the announced withdrawal of the forces of the first Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX 1).

Republic of the Congo

During the period under review, the Republic of the Congo continued its usual efforts in the areas of peace, security, stability and national reconciliation. In the political realm, a new Government was formed after the legislative elections of 15 July and 5 August 2012, which the Parti Congolais du Travail carried by a large margin. Along those same lines, the electoral dispute following these votes led the Constitutional Court to cancel the results in the districts of Dongou and Bouanela in

the department of Likouala, and in Kellé in the department of Western Cuvette, in the northern part of the country. The elections were held again on 2 December 2012, and the results will be released in the near future.

With regard to security, effective maintenance of public order has continued, despite some incidents of organized crime and other criminal offences, particularly in the major cities.

Striking progress has been made in governance, especially with the discovery of 4,900 fictitious employees (civilian and military) that were included in the State budget.

Lastly, in the area of humanitarian assistance, the Congo has continued efforts to aid those displaced by the events of 4 March 2012 through financial compensation and construction of public housing. The State also decided to compensate the victims of the explosions in Mpila in the amount of 25 million CFA francs for each life that was lost.

The Government has continued to provide aid to refugees from Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. Operations, both completed and ongoing, to carry out voluntary repatriation of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in partnership with UNHCR have enabled some 40,000 refugees to return to their country of origin. The declaration on the cessation of refugee status for Angolan refugees entered into force on 30 September 2012. Cessation of refugee status for Rwandan refugees will enter into force on 30 June 2013. Moreover, since 2 November 2012, the Republic of the Congo has received 239 of its nationals (formerly refugees in Gabon), who were expelled by the Gabonese authorities under the agreement reached with Gabon.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Democratic Republic of the Congo reported on the dramatic humanitarian situation in the eastern part of the country, with more than 8 million dead and 1.5 million displaced in the past two decades.

At the political level, the Government is continuing its efforts to strengthen the democracy of institutions, as described in the review of the geopolitical and security situation of the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee, and gave assurances that local elections will be organized in the near future.

Despite the difficult situation facing the country, it successfully organized the Summit of Heads of State and Government of la Francophonie, and continued to make major efforts to modernize its democratic system.

The political authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo intend to revamp the independent national electoral commission, in the light of the criticism of the most recent round of elections. Also under the heading of political developments, gubernatorial elections for the Bas-Congo and Orientale provinces have been organized. Lastly, the opposition is concerned that no date has been set for the local elections, with a view to completing the electoral process initiated in 2006.

With regard to domestic and cross-border security, the situation has worsened owing to the military activities of the M23 rebel group, which resulted in the takeover of Goma on 20 November 2012. Since the withdrawal which followed the

political negotiations held in Kampala, at the recent Extraordinary Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) held on 24 November, the Congolese authorities have been working to restore public order and the functioning of institutions in that city.

Six extraordinary summits organized by ICGLR have been held to help resolve the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Committee welcomes the commitment of ICGLR to the quest for a lasting solution to the crisis.

The review noted the report of the United Nations Group of Experts which accuses Rwanda and Uganda of supporting the rebels. In that connection, Rwanda has submitted to the Security Council its comments on the report, which it described as partial and incorrect.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo currently has more than 1.5 million internally displaced persons living in precarious conditions, according to United Nations agencies; that makes the humanitarian situation a grave concern. According to UNHCR, many Congolese citizens have also crossed the border with Burundi, Uganda and Rwanda since the start of the conflict, owing to the insecurity in their areas of origin. The number of Congolese refugees in Rwanda is estimated at more than 30,000 for the years before 2012 and at more than 20,000 for 2012.

Gabonese Republic

Since the previous ministerial meeting, the overall situation in the Gabonese Republic has been peaceful and stable.

The political climate has reflected the increased tension between an opposition demanding the organization of a national sovereign conference or an inclusive political dialogue and a majority that does not consider such an initiative necessary, because the country is not in a political crisis. However, the President of the Republic has announced a dialogue with certain opposition leaders and the relaunching of the activities of the National Council for Democracy. Consolidation of the democratic process has continued with the effective introduction of biometrics in the electoral system, despite the opposition's protests regarding the ways and means of controlling biometrics. At the same time, the opposition has started to unite around two groups: the Union des forces du changement and the Alliance pour le changement et la restauration.

With regard to security, the period under review was characterized by the August 2012 riots in the Nkembo and Cocotiers districts of Libreville, following the cancellation of an unauthorized opposition meeting by the competent authorities. These events caused significant material damage and led to numerous arrests and prosecutions of demonstrators charged with destruction of public and private property.

Nevertheless, the country's stability and momentum have remained encouraging, especially with the reforms undertaken by the authorities to improve governance and combat social inequality and the high cost of living.

Republic of Equatorial Guinea

Since the Committee's previous ministerial meeting in May 2012, in Bujumbura, the situation in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea has been one of

peace, security and stability. This positive state of affairs has brought tangible socioeconomic development in the form of major infrastructure, power generation and sanitation projects. This positive climate has led to major national and international achievements in the country.

At the political level, Equatorial Guinea formed a transitional Government, which has been in place for eight months, responsible for establishing the State's new democratic institutions, as set out in the new Constitution adopted by the November 2011 referendum.

Also of note was the successful convening of a national employment conference, which defined a fresh vision for employer-employee relations and led to the establishment of the country's new employment legislation.

At the regional and international levels, Equatorial Guinea established a national plan for accession to and ratification of international instruments on human rights and environmental protection and implemented an international solidarity strategy.

With regard to social and humanitarian issues, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea identified famine, disease and poverty as major threats to peace and stability, and established two major international solidarity funds to combat them: the UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea fund, initially for a total of $3 million, for research in the field of life sciences; and the FAO-Equatorial Guinea fund for food security in Africa, for $30 million. Equatorial Guinea also provides financial support for friendly countries hit by natural disasters.

Domestic and border security have been stable, with normal functioning of the national security services.

In response to the considerable pressure from illegal immigration into the country as a result of its economic growth, Equatorial Guinea has held political and diplomatic negotiations with its neighbours to establish a common strategy on emigration and have reached an agreement on the temporary closure of the borders, if circumstances so require.

In that regard, Equatorial Guinea reaffirms to the Committee its respect for the principles of international law and has made an unequivocal commitment to make every possible effort to guarantee domestic peace and security and collaborate fully with subregional, regional and international initiatives to maintain peace in the world.

Republic of Rwanda

Since the previous ministerial meeting, the overall situation in Rwanda has been characterized by the normal stability and functioning of its institutions, as has been the case in the country for more than 10 years.

At the political level, the country celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its independence in a calm and reflective spirit.

In addition, Rwanda was elected as a member of the United Nations Security Council for a two-year term beginning in January 2013.

Finally, the period under review was characterized by the closing of the Gacaca, the traditional courts that for a decade conducted the trials of hundreds of

thousands of persons accused of genocide. Preparations for the closing of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, based in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, also began during this period, as well as the transfer of certain files in its possession regarding persons accused of genocide.

Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe

Since the previous ministerial meeting, the general situation in the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe has been one of peace and stability.

In the political sphere, after the orderly holding of the July 2011 presidential elections, the country's efforts have focused on human development, an area in which its indicators are among the best in Central Africa (life expectancy, literacy, and so on). This progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals has been acknowledged by the United Nations.

The favourable climate facilitated the conduct of a general population census. The results show that the country has 187,263 inhabitants.

Nevertheless, the opposition stepped up its criticism of the Prime Minister's leadership, going so far as to introduce a motion of no confidence in parliament and forcing him to dismiss the Minister of Health and Social Affairs. In addition, the opposition has called for the President of the Republic to intervene to "preserve democracy", and proposed a national sovereign conference to find solutions to the country's problems. However, the Government has just been dismissed by presidential decree following the introduction by the opposition of a second motion of no confidence, which was adopted in the absence of deputies from the party supporting the Government. This has led to a political crisis because, according to the governing party, the President of the Republic must dissolve parliament and call early legislative elections, whereas the opposition claims that a new Government must be formed.

The domestic and cross-border security situation is stable. However, there has been a resurgence of crime in some cities. The authorities have promised appropriate steps, including the introduction of community policing.

Republic of Chad

The overall situation in the Republic of Chad since the previous ministerial meeting has been one of peace and stability.

With respect to domestic politics, the dialogue between the Government and the opposition has continued in a climate of calm. That has enabled the country to undertake a campaign to improve standards in public life and counter corruption. As a result, prosecutions have been brought against senior national and local officials. However, the social climate has remained tense with the prolonged strike by civil servants who are demanding the higher salaries promised by the Government.

With regard to domestic and cross-border security, the peace process, fuelled by a favourable political climate, is progressing positively, to the extent that there are now virtually no armed rebels on Chadian territory. Mr. Baba Ladé's armed rebels, who operated in the Central African Republic, have just turned in their weapons. Although there have been acts of organized crime in the city of N'Djamena, the authorities have been able to deal with them effectively.

Finally, Amnesty International published a report on the disturbing living conditions in Chadian prisons. For example, the report reveals that on the whole the number of prisoners exceeds true capacity. It highlights the need for prisons that meet international standards. It is in that context that seven prisons have been completed and others are under construction.

V. Disarmament in the Central African subregion

Briefing by ECCAS and UNREC on disarmament and non-proliferation in Central Africa in the 20 years since the Committee's establishment

20. By its resolution 46/37 B of 6 December 1991, the United Nations General Assembly established the Committee and, inter alia, supported and encouraged "efforts aimed at promoting confidence-building measures at regional and subregional levels in order to ease regional tensions and to further disarmament and non-proliferation measures at regional and subregional levels in Central Africa".

21. ECCAS and UNREC have given briefings on disarmament and non-proliferation in Central Africa throughout the 20 years of the Committee's existence.

22. In the briefing, the representative of ECCAS reported on the implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative. The briefing began with the historical background to the Initiative before examining the goals of the Initiative's two components and the activities undertaken in various countries in the context of its implementation. The briefing then focused on regional and international cooperation, including with the African Union on its regional strategy for the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention. That cooperation is mainly a question of updates in order to identify common positions for capacity-building. The briefing also addressed the process for negotiating the Arms Trade Treaty and urged all member States to participate in the meetings scheduled for March 2013.

23. The Committee then made the following recommendations:

Implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative (Kinshasa Convention)

- States members of the Committee are encouraged to ratify the Kinshasa Convention so that it can enter into force in 2013
- States that do not yet have national commissions on small arms and light weapons should establish them pursuant to their commitments under the Kinshasa Convention
- The States members of the Committee should implement the Kinshasa Convention
- The ECCAS general secretariat, which is responsible for working with member States in their implementation of the Kinshasa Convention, should take all necessary steps to have a Portuguese-language version of the Convention made available

Implementation of the Sao Tome Declaration

- The ECCAS secretariat is encouraged to participate effectively in the new diplomatic conference to be held from 18 to 28 March 2013 in New York to

finalize the Arms Trade Treaty and to protect the interests of the Central African subregion

- Member States are encouraged to participate effectively in the new diplomatic conference to be held from 18 to 28 March 2013 in New York to finalize the Arms Trade Treaty and to protect the interests of the Central African subregion
- Member States are encouraged to participate in the subregional workshop to be held in Libreville on 30 and 31 January 2013 by the ECCAS secretariat and the International Action Network on Small Arms on preparations by member States for the Arms Trade Treaty negotiations to be held in New York from 18 to 28 March 2013.

Briefing by UNREC

24. Highlighting recent national, regional, subregional and international political and legal instruments and mechanisms concerning controls for conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, and weapons of mass destruction, the representative of UNREC gave a briefing on disarmament in the Central African subregion. Against that background, the representative paid special attention to the Kinshasa Convention, the United Nations Programme of Action, the International Tracing Instrument, the United Nations Firearms Protocol, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the Arms Trade Treaty.

25. On that last point, he proposed a review of the current initiatives, highlighting the fact that the General Assembly's First Committee had adopted a resolution convening a new round of negotiations on the Arms Trade Treaty. He reported that the Final United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty would be held in New York from 18 to 28 March 2013. UNREC planned a preparatory meeting for the Conference in Addis Ababa in February 2013 in order to offer its assistance to African States. The meeting would follow up on the January 2013 African Union Summit, where the common African position on the Arms Trade Treaty and the African Union's draft strategy on small arms and light weapons would be discussed.

26. The representative of UNREC noted that Central African States must remain committed to the negotiations that would take place prior to the Final United Nations Conference in March 2013 to ensure that the subregion's interests were adequately protected.

27. The Committee took note of the observations and the relevant recommendations made by UNREC, which renewed its commitment to continued support for the Committee's member States in the implementation of their programmes. UNREC also offered to provide technical and legal assistance for, inter alia, the adoption and implementation of small arms and light weapons legislation in appropriate time frames and for strengthening government capacities in all matters related to armaments, especially stockpile management, registration and the management of national commissions.

Implementation of the Declaration on a Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of Arms in Central Africa in accordance with the recommendation made at the thirty-third ministerial meeting of the Committee

28. In accordance with the recommendation made at the thirty-third ministerial meeting of the Committee, the representative of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs gave a briefing on the implementation of the Declaration on a Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of Arms in Central Africa. In that regard, he presented the conclusions of the workshop on counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa, held in Brazzaville on 1 and 2 December 2012. Those conclusions essentially related to porous borders, problems related to small arms and light weapons, efforts to counter organized crime, the lack of equipment, the need for training of expert officials, the need for information-sharing at all levels, the need for internal coordination, good governance and the implementation of a socioeconomic and legal framework to facilitate counter-terrorism.

29. At the end of the proceedings, the regional counter-terrorism coordinator, the national coordinators and the thematic focal points were designated. Two thematic workshops were planned for 2013. The first would be held in Libreville during the first half of the year.

VI. Peace and security in Central Africa

30. The Committee welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 67/70 on regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, sponsored by Burundi and the Congo.

31. Briefings were given on the subject by representatives of ECCAS and UNREC. The representative of ECCAS focused essentially on the implementation of the Central African peace and security architecture and the current status of the Central African Multinational Force (FOMAC) and the Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC) within that system. In that regard, an account was given of the efforts made in the context of the first Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX I) and the enhancement of security in the Gulf of Guinea, including the successes, challenges and prospects for the future.

32. The representative of UNOCA gave an update on the activities undertaken as part of the implementation of Security Council resolution 2039 (2012) on maritime piracy in order to counter piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, in particular the convening of a regional summit on the issue. The UNOCA representative also reported on the efforts made in conjunction with the African Union and other partners for the implementation of a regional strategy to counter the activities of LRA.

33. The Committee welcomed the decision to hold the Summit of Heads of State and Government in Cameroon in April 2013 and the ministerial meeting in Benin in March 2013, which would facilitate the adoption of a regional strategy on the sustainable measures to be taken to ensure security on the high seas off the coasts of the Gulf of Guinea.

34. The Committee then made the following recommendations:

- The Committee encourages member States to adopt a comprehensive approach to countering piracy and eliminating its underlying causes
- The Committee recommends that piracy should be criminalized in member States' domestic legislation and that persons who have engaged in acts of piracy should be prosecuted, and imprisoned if convicted
- The Committee invites member States and organizations to share evidence, data and information for the purpose of suppressing acts of piracy
- The Committee encourages the coordination of efforts at the regional level to develop a comprehensive strategy to counter acts of piracy and the provision of international assistance to support national and regional efforts
- The Committee encourages member States to make available to the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa (CRESMAC) the financial and logistical resources required for it to become operational.

VII. Cooperation between the African Union, regional and subregional organizations in Central Africa and the Committee to achieve peace and security in the subregion

35. In his capacity as outgoing Chair of the Committee, the representative of Burundi made a presentation in which he emphasized the Committee's excellent relations with various subregional organizations, in particular ECCAS and ICGLR. He emphasized the need to strengthen cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and expressed the hope that such cooperation would be extended to other organizations.

36. The representative of ECCAS paid tribute to that organization's relations with the Committee and gave an account of the cooperation between the two bodies, which dated from the Committee's establishment in 1992. He also stressed the Committee's contribution to the implementation of the ECCAS peace and security architecture.

VIII. Cooperation between United Nations entities in the subregion and the Committee in the context of peace and security in Central Africa

37. Representatives of the following bodies gave briefings on their cooperation with the Committee: United Nations Department of Political Affairs, United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, MONUSCO, UN-Women subregional office for Central Africa, and UNREC.

38. The Deputy Director of the Africa II Division of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs emphasized the support provided by the United Nations to the Committee in its efforts to consolidate its achievements and develop new initiatives to meet the challenges faced by Central Africa, particularly in the context of the implementation of the Kinshasa Convention, the Declaration on a Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of Arms in Central Africa, the efforts to counter maritime piracy, and capacity-building in subregional organizations working in the area of peace and security in Central Africa.

39. The representative of the United Nations Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, based in Yaoundé, said that such cooperation related essentially to capacity-building for the parties concerned at the national and regional levels in a number of areas. The Centre, however, was facing challenges related to the ratification of certain instruments, the establishment and operationalization of national human rights institutions and the political participation and inclusion of marginalized groups.

40. The representative of MONUSCO gave an overview of the Mission's activities in the area of peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of the support which it was providing to the Government of that country, particularly in combating armed groups and the illicit exploitation of minerals.

41. The representative of the subregional office of UN-Women reported on the action taken since the previous meeting of the Committee, held in Bujumbura, particularly in the context of the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) on women and peace and security, and General Assembly resolution 65/69 of 8 December 2010 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

42. She also described the subregional office's contribution to the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the activities of UNOCA, particularly the section on the situation of women in Central Africa. The two institutions were working in a coordinated fashion to reinforce advocacy for the appointment of women mediators in the subregion. The Director of the UN-Women subregional office for Central Africa also informed the Committee of her efforts to involve the security forces in efforts to counter violence against women. Under the high patronage of Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of Burundi, the Second International Conference on the Role of Security Organs in Ending Violence against Women and Girls had been held in Bujumbura on 27 and 28 November 2012. The Conference had been organized in the context of the Secretary-General's "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" campaign and the declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the States members of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region at the Fourth Ordinary Summit and Special Session on Sexual and Gender Based Violence in December 2011, following the insecurity in the region. Thirty-five African countries, the African Union, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the United Nations had participated in the Conference, which had been the first time that representatives of security forces (military, police, intelligence services and INTERPOL) had met with the sole objective of finding lasting strategies to counter the scourge of violence against women.

IX. Responsibilities of member States and partners for improving the operations of the Committee

43. The secretariat gave a briefing on this matter, emphasizing the constraints relating to the functioning of the Committee, and made proposals aimed at improving the situation. The main constraints faced by the Committee were the member States' contributions to the Trust Fund, meeting planning and preparation, the level of participation in Committee meetings, and monitoring of the implementation of recommendations made at Committee meetings.

44. With regard to the preparation of meeting agendas and documents, it was recommended that the member States' permanent missions in New York should be involved.

45. With a view to ensuring the effective participation of all member States in the Committee's activities, UNOCA and ECCAS would consider the provision of services, in the context of the partnership between the two institutions, for the translation of the principal documents into the Portuguese language.

X. Preparations for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Committee

46. The representative of the host country and the secretariat updated the Committee on the progress of the preparations for the commemoration of its twentieth anniversary, which would take place on 7 December 2012 on the theme "Two decades of peacebuilding in Central Africa: the contribution and perspectives of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa". The celebration would be an opportunity for the Committee to review its achievements, raise the profile of its activities and plan its actions on the basis of priorities established at the subregional level.

XI. Place and date of the next meeting

47. The Committee decided to hold its thirty-sixth ministerial meeting in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The dates would be determined in due course.

XII. Other matters

48. The representative of ECCAS gave a presentation on the efforts to put its peace and security architecture into operation, emphasizing the civilian component of that architecture. Those efforts should be viewed in the context of the operationalization of the African Union architecture in 2015.

XIII. Adoption of the report of the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting of the Committee

49. The Committee adopted the present report on 6 December 2012.

C. Expression of thanks

50. The following expression of thanks was read out:

"We, representatives of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered on the occasion of the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting, held in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, from 3 to 6 December 2012,

Reaffirm our attachment to the ideals of peace, stability and security that are so necessary for our respective peoples and for the socioeconomic development of our subregion;

Welcome the efforts made by our countries, individually and collectively, to promote peace, security, stability and development;

Welcome the atmosphere of conviviality, brotherhood and mutual trust that has prevailed throughout our work;

Express our sincere thanks and our profound gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou N'Guesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, and to the Government and people of the Congo, for the warm and fraternal welcome we have received during our stay in the Republic of the Congo."

Brazzaville, 6 December 2012

Annex I

Report of the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Recommendations

In the course of the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, from 3 to 6 December 2012, the following recommendations were made:

IV. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

The Committee:

- Recommends a review, at each meeting, of the status of ratification and implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, ratified to date by only three member States
- Encourages member States to take advantage of the introduction of biometrics into electoral systems to update their civil registry systems and make them biometric too
- Recommends the establishment of a regional strategy to combat drugs and other psychotropic substances and encourages each member State to establish or strengthen national commissions specifically for that purpose and report on their activities to the Committee
- Recommends the establishment of a regional strategy and a framework for cooperation and reflection on security in correctional facilities to address trafficking in drugs and small arms and light weapons within prisons
- Recommends the recognition of cross-cutting threats related to peace and security, such as piracy and terrorism

V. Disarmament in the Central African subregion

Implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative (Kinshasa Convention)

The Committee:

- Encourages member States to ratify the Kinshasa Convention so that it can enter into force in 2013
- Encourages States that do not yet have national commissions on small arms and light weapons to establish them pursuant to their commitments under the Kinshasa Convention
- Encourages the States members of the Committee to implement the Kinshasa Convention
- Encourages the ECCAS general secretariat, which is responsible for working with member States in their implementation of the Kinshasa Convention, to take all necessary steps to have a Portuguese-language version of the Convention made available

Implementation of the Sao Tome Declaration

The Committee:

- Encourages the ECCAS secretariat to participate effectively in the new diplomatic conference to be held from 18 to 28 March 2013 in New York to finalize the Arms Trade Treaty and to protect the interests of the Central African subregion
- Encourages member States to participate effectively in the new diplomatic conference to be held from 18 to 28 March 2013 in New York to finalize the Arms Trade Treaty and to protect the interests of the Central African subregion
- Encourages member States to participate in the subregional workshop to be held in Libreville on 30 and 31 January 2013 by the ECCAS secretariat and the International Action Network on Small Arms on preparations by member States for the Arms Trade Treaty negotiations to be held in New York from 18 to 28 March 2013

VI. Peace and security in Central Africa

The Committee:

- Encourages member States to adopt a comprehensive approach to countering piracy and eliminating its underlying causes
- Recommends that piracy should be criminalized in member States' domestic legislation and that persons who have engaged in acts of piracy should be prosecuted, and imprisoned if convicted
- Invites member States and organizations to share evidence, data and information for the purpose of suppressing acts of piracy
- Encourages the coordination of efforts at the regional level to develop a comprehensive strategy to counter acts of piracy and the provision of international assistance to support national and regional efforts
- Encourages member States to make available to the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa (CRESMAC) the financial and logistical resources required for it to become operational

VIII. Cooperation between United Nations entities in the subregion and the Committee in the context of peace and security in Central Africa

IX. Responsibilities of member States and partners for improving the operations of the Committee

The Committee:

- Recommends that the member States' permanent missions in New York should be involved in the preparation of meeting agendas and documents
- Recommends that UNOCA and ECCAS should consider the provision of services, in the context of the partnership between the two institutions, for the translation of the principal documents into the Portuguese language with a view to ensuring the effective participation of all member States in the Committee's activities

Annex II

Twentieth anniversary of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, with the theme:

"Two decades of peacebuilding in Central Africa"

Brazzaville, 7 December 2012

Introduction

1. It was decided at the thirty-third ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa that the commemoration of the Committee's twentieth anniversary would take place in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, during the Committee's thirty-fifth ministerial meeting. Following the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting, held in Brazzaville from 3 to 6 December 2012, the Committee commemorated its twentieth anniversary in the same city on 7 December 2012.

2. Representatives of the following member States participated in the commemoration: Republic of Angola, Republic of Burundi, Republic of Cameroon, Central African Republic, Republic of Chad, Republic of the Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Gabonese Republic, Republic of Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

3. The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) served as the Committee's secretariat.

4. The following United Nations entities attended: United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), UN-Women subregional office for Central Africa, and UNOCA. The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs was represented by the Deputy Director of the Africa II Division.

5. Also present as special guests were representatives of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the African Union. Mr. Sammy Kum Buo, former Director of the Africa II Division of the Department of Political Affairs, participated in his capacity as former Secretary of the Committee.

6. The following speakers made statements at the opening ceremony: Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, representing the Chairperson of the African Union Commission; Mr. Guy Pierre Garcia, Deputy Secretary-General of ECCAS, representing the Secretary-General of ECCAS; and Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA.

7. His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou N'Guesso, President of the Republic of the Congo, delivered the ceremony's keynote address.

8. A declaration entitled the "Brazzaville Declaration", adopted on 6 December 2012 at the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting, was read out by Mr. Antoine Gambi,

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic.

I. Opening ceremony

9. Screening of a documentary about Operation Kwanza.

A film tracing the origins of Operation Kwanza and its impact in the subregion was screened.

10. Address by the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security

In his address, Mr. Lamamra recalled the various stages through which African States had passed in terms of conflict prevention, management and resolution since the twenty-ninth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held in Cairo, Egypt, in 1993. He stressed that good economic governance, respect for human rights and the preservation of the environment were essential elements of national and international peacebuilding. He praised the Committee's achievements, in particular the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa and the Declaration on a Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of Arms in Central Africa, and the Non-Aggression Pact between the members of the Committee, which were important instruments. Lastly, he reaffirmed the desire of the African Union to support the Committee in its action with regard to any conflict situations of which it was seized.

11. Address by the representative of the Secretary-General of ECCAS

Mr. Garcia urged the Committee members to discharge their financial responsibilities to ECCAS more regularly.

12. Address by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA

Mr. Abou Moussa reiterated the steadfast determination of the United Nations to continue to help the Committee to meet the many challenges facing the subregion in the area of peace and security. He listed the urgent questions, highlighting: the resurgence of armed groups in certain Member States and their consequences in security and humanitarian terms for the entire region; transnational organized crime and trafficking of all types, including drug trafficking and trafficking in persons, particularly children and young girls; the rise of cross-border insecurity and organized crime along the main roads linking the countries of the subregion; and the terrorist threats in the neighbouring Sahel and their impact on Central Africa. On the last point, he emphasized that the United Nations Secretary-General had welcomed the implementation of a regional network of counter-terrorism focal points, in accordance with the Declaration on a Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of Arms in Central Africa adopted at the Committee's thirty-third ministerial meeting, held in Bangui, Central African Republic, in December 2011.

He reaffirmed the UNOCA mission of peace in Central Africa. Indeed, according to its mandate, UNOCA had the crucial mission of supporting the subregion in the field of preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding, particularly with a view to better coordination of actions among the United Nations and its subregional partners, in particular ECCAS.

13. Audiovisual message from the President of the sixty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly

The President of the General Assembly praised the work of the secretariat in general and recalled that security in Africa should be the preferred path for all States to ensure the well-being of the subregion. In his view, the Committee was a platform for achieving shared progress towards peace in the subregion. He also praised the efforts of the Committee and its relations with other subregional organizations, and encouraged the Member States to continue that close cooperation with the Committee, while assuring them of the constant support of the United Nations.

14. Expression of thanks

An expression of thanks to the Government and people of the Congo was read out by Ms. Ruth Tédébé, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and African Integration of Chad.

15. Keynote address by the President of the Republic of the Congo

President Denis Sassou N'Guesso looked back over the history of the Committee, its actions and its achievements since its first meeting in Yaoundé, in 1992. He recalled that the vision defined at that time had been based on a work programme focused on three peace and security parameters: preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding, and peacemaking and peacekeeping. Twenty years later, a significant peace and security architecture had been implemented, in particular with instruments such as the Non-Aggression Pact, the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), the Code of Conduct and the Kinshasa Convention. He also said that, despite those advances in the area of peace and security in the region, pockets of conflict remained in Central Africa, particularly in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the rebel M23 movement was active in the town of Goma, and in the Central African Republic, with the presence of LRA, which he described as "an unacceptable blow to the sovereignty of our States".

Lastly, the President of the Congo urged those present to demonstrate greater commitment, political will and compliance with decisions in order to achieve their objectives for prosperity for the peoples of the subregion.

II. Summary of proceedings

16. In declaring open the meeting to commemorate the Committee's twentieth anniversary, Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa, echoed the sentiments expressed in Mr. Sassou N'Guesso's keynote address, which had touched upon all areas of peace and security in the subregion. He then introduced the presentation of Mr. Kossi Agokla of UNREC, pointing out that the commemoration provided the Committee with an opportunity not only to commemorate its twentieth anniversary but also to clearly and honestly report on the action taken to date, so that it could adequately address future challenges and build on its achievements.

17. Presentation on the theme "Two decades of peacebuilding in Central Africa: the contribution of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa" by Mr. Kossi Agokla, UNREC. In his presentation, Mr. Agokla highlighted the Committee's contribution in certain areas, in particular:

- The development of entities for the promotion of peace and security in Central Africa, including the establishment of national commissions and focal points to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and the establishment of COPAX and its subsidiary bodies;
- The establishment of institutions for the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Central Africa, in particular the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa and the subregional parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC);
- The construction of regulatory and legal frameworks for peace and security in Central Africa, in particular the Non-Aggression Pact, the Mutual Assistance Pact among the States members of ECCAS and the Sao Tome Initiative.

The Committee had promoted the development of regulatory and legal frameworks for peace and security in the subregion through subregional and international legal instruments. It was thus a source of assistance for the countries of Central Africa, for which it served as a forum for exchanges of views and discussions with a view to the securing and promotion of their interests at the subregional, national and international levels. The work of the Committee increased the visibility of Central African interests in the area of security and enhanced the solutions proposed by the member States within the international community.

The Committee's future prospects would depend to a large extent on the political will of its member States to work towards security cooperation in the region. The process of revitalizing its activities and ensuring its ownership by the member States should be viewed in that context. Constant financial and political efforts were needed to ensure the availability and maintenance of a consultation framework for the States of the Central African subregion under the auspices of the United Nations.

18. Views of the Committee (Chair)

Mr. Basile Ikouébé, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Congo, the incoming Chair of the Committee, said that the States members of the Committee must take ownership of it through parliaments, civil society, young people and women. Effective implementation of the instruments adopted was also necessary, since ratification was often a lengthy process for the various member States. The Chair of the Committee expressed regret over the fact that States did not pay their contributions to the Trust Fund regularly. He stressed the need to revitalize the Committee, in particular through participation in meetings for which the presence of all members was necessary. He also recommended that the practice of conducting the ECCAS geopolitical review should be made permanent. He emphasized the need to report on situations as they were on the ground, and to conduct a general evaluation of the situation in the subregion prior to consideration of the specific situation of each country. Lastly, he stressed that the Committee should adopt genuine positions and reflect in depth on certain situations of concern in the region.

19. Views of ECCAS

The representative of ECCAS said that the Committee had played a major role in establishing its architecture, in particular through the creation of COPAX.

However, noting that the Council was cumbersome and slow to react, ECCAS recommended that its operating mechanism should be changed. Financial contributions to the running of COPAX were not paid in a regular manner.

20. Views of the African Union

The representative of the African Union said that ways and means should be found of working effectively with the Committee. It would be desirable to conduct a review of the Cairo Declaration Establishing the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, so that new data could be taken into account. Peacekeeping operations were costly in terms of human resources, funding and equipment; peace, and therefore good governance, should be promoted through mediation and preventive diplomacy. The region would have to learn to rely on its own resources before requesting international assistance. It would therefore be wise to finance regional activities properly. It was thus essential to develop synergy among the various activities on the continent.

21. Views of the United Nations

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa proposed that the text of Mr. Sassou N'Guesso's address should be considered as a working paper of the Committee, since it reviewed all the issues and situations addressed by the Committee. The proposal was accepted. It was therefore decided that the text of the address would be attached to the report on the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary.

III. Comments, discussions, questions and answers

22. The discussions provided the opportunity for various actors, partners and observers of the Committee to reflect in depth on peace and security questions in Central Africa and the challenges facing the subregion. Mr. Sassou N'Guesso gave clear guidelines in relation to those challenges: "It is ... up to us to demonstrate greater commitment, political will, compliance with decisions and solidarity in order to build a stronger Central Africa that is more secure, stable, integrated and prosperous," he said in his address at the opening of the ceremony to commemorate the Committee's twentieth anniversary. All those participating in the discussions agreed with and expanded on that statement.

23. In particular, Mr. Sammy Buo, the former Director of the Africa II Division of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, made a statement tracing the origins of the Committee and how it came into being. Speaking in his dual capacity as a pioneer in the establishment of the Committee and its first Secretary, Mr. Buo recalled that it had been created at the request of the subregion's political authorities. He stressed the importance of the institution, which was intended to fill a void in the prevention and resolution of security questions in Central Africa. He urged member States to work towards consolidating the Committee's achievements so that it could meet the challenges at hand.

IV. Presentation of documents about the Committee

24. Two documents, which had been prepared by the secretariat and outlined the functioning and achievements of the Committee as a structure for preventive

diplomacy, were distributed to the member States. Those documents were a compilation of the reports of the ministerial meetings of the Committee and a compilation of peace instruments elaborated by the Committee.

V. Closure of the meeting

25. The Chair of the Committee delivered the closing address and invited the delegates to attend the football match to be played at the Alphonse Massamba-Débat stadium between Tout-Puissant Mazembé of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Diables Noirs of the Congo as one of the commemorative events for the Committee's twentieth anniversary. The match was won by Tout-Puissant Mazembé, which scored two goals to none against the Diables Noirs.

26. This sporting event, entitled "Match for Peace and Security in Central Africa", was organized by UNOCA and the African Football Confederation, with assistance from the Government of the Congo, which had hosted the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting and the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Committee.

Attachment

Address by the President of the Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou N'Guesso

Ministers of States members of the Standing Advisory Committee,

Heads of delegation, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa,

Peace and Security Commissioner of the African Union,

Representative of the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States,

Heads of diplomatic missions,

Delegates,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I warmly welcome you to Brazzaville, I should first like to thank you for having entrusted the Congo with the organization of both the thirty-fifth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee and the commemoration of its twentieth anniversary.

This is an opportunity for us to look back on what has been achieved since the promises made in Yaoundé in 1992 to build a collective peace based on mutual trust, sharing of experiences and pooling of resources. It is also an opportunity to learn lessons from the past in order to build a more secure future for our peoples and an integrated area for cooperation in conflict prevention, management and resolution, and in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction.

We must recall that when the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 46/37 B of 6 December 1991, established this Committee at the request of the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), we could scarcely have imagined that a few years later, seven of our eleven member States would be involved in fratricidal armed conflicts.

The vision outlined in Yaoundé in July 1992 was based on a vast programme of work involving short-, medium- and long-term activities that were essentially focused on three parameters of peace and security: preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding, and peacemaking and peacekeeping.

The main aims of member States were to:

- Accede to international legal instruments on arms limitation, disarmament and renunciation of the production, acquisition or transfer of weapons of mass destruction
- Conclude a subregional non-aggression pact
- Enhance the democratization process and the promotion of respect for human rights and the rule of law in the subregion
- Advance cooperation with a view to enhancing training for military personnel and civilians in peacekeeping or peacemaking

- Create a permanent inter-State mechanism for the management and prevention of crises and conflicts
- Organize joint military manoeuvres and exercises and joint patrols
- Set up peace operations units in the armed forces of each member State
- Devise and strengthen mechanisms and instruments that promote peaceful solutions to disputes and bolster regional integration

That was our road map for achieving collective security in Central Africa; the essential elements of what I call the Yaoundé promise.

Twenty years later, what progress has been made?

As early as April 2002, when the Committee commemorated its tenth anniversary in Kinshasa, we addressed the issue of revitalizing the Committee so that it could deliver more results in the future.

The peace and security architecture has been gradually implemented. The instruments, with which you are all familiar, include: the Non-Aggression Pact, the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) and its subsidiary bodies, the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa, the Agreement on Judicial Cooperation on Criminal Police Matters among Central African States, and the Kinshasa Convention.

These are the instruments that shape our vision.

Of course, many of the wars that raged in our subregion in the late 1990s were resolved in part through our subregional mechanisms, which are based on dialogue, joint action and mediation.

However, there are still hotbeds of tension, such as the abiding crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, to which both this Committee and ECCAS should give their full attention so as to contribute to the highly commendable efforts of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. We must show unwavering solidarity with the authorities and the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who have long suffered from these recurrent crises, which need lasting solutions and the help of all.

We must be equally resolute regarding the presence of LRA forces in some of our territories, as is the case in the Central African Republic, which is an unacceptable blow to the sovereignty of our States.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On 1 and 2 December 2012 in Brazzaville, a workshop on the Bangui Declaration on a Road Map for Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of Arms in Central Africa was conducted, following the same encouraging momentum.

On 2 March 2011 in Libreville, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, headed by our brother here present, Mr. Abou Moussa, began its operations, thus strengthening the presence of the United Nations in our subregion and providing local assistance.

This is proof that much has been done so that our entire subregion, this immense reservoir of natural resources, may return to the requisite state of peace and security for its harmonious development for the benefit of its peoples.

So there is still reason to hope. There are positive signs to be seen in current events:

- The conclusions of the Kampala Summit of 24 November 2012 on the crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo have begun to be implemented; and
- There has been progress in the project to establish the road-rail bridge linking Brazzaville to Kinshasa, an important link in the trans-African route and a driver of integration and development.

It is therefore up to us to demonstrate greater commitment, political will, compliance with decisions and solidarity in order to build a stronger Central Africa that is more secure, stable, integrated and prosperous.

Happy anniversary.

Long live Central Africa.

Long live African unity.

Long live the United Nations.

Long live international cooperation.